

INFINITY WORKSHOP THEATRE

PLAYWRITING AND IMAGINATION *PEOPLE IN A PLACE WITH A PROBLEM TO SOLVE*

DEPARTURE MATERIAL

Indian Health Service

An original by

Aden Ross

PRESENTERS

Aden Ross, Professional Playwright (Pre-Infinity Event)

Anne Decker, Professional Actor (Infinity Event)

Tony Larimer, Professional Actor (Infinity Event)

Xan Johnson, Professional Drama Educator (Post-Infinity Event)

GRADE LEVEL

K-6

Pre-Infinity Event

DESCRIPTION: Utah professional playwright **Aden Ross** will focus the **Pre-Infinity Event** on several key insights about her process of playwriting:

- The *whole* play and the importance of the *audience*
- *Stage readings* and their importance to playwrights and their challenge to actors
- Defining a *play*
- Where the *ideas* come from, especially in this play
- The *tools* of the playwright

Infinity Event

DESCRIPTION: Professional playwright **Aden Ross** will share with us her world premiere of an original ten-minute play she wrote entitled **Indian Health Service** that she has never heard life before an audience. Utah professional actors **Anne Decker** and **Tony Larimer** will perform this **Infinity Event**.

Post-Infinity Event

DESCRIPTION: **Xan Johnson**, Drama Consultant for the USOE, will conduct a mini-workshop on how to introduce playwriting in the elementary grades while teaching the K-6 Drama Core Curriculum.

Procedures

Reader's Theatre – a great place to begin:

WHEN TEACHING DRAMA or LANGUAGE ARTS/READING, PLEASE CONSIDER INCLUDING **DRAMATIC LITERATURE** (PLAY SCRIPTS), ESPECIALLY PLAYS BASED ON ORIGINAL STORIES, AS OPPOSED TO ADAPTATIONS OF POPULAR EXISTING CHILDREN'S BOOKS. HERE ARE SOME EXCELLENT AWARD WINNING PLAY SCRIPTS FROM AWARD WINNING PLAYWRIGHTS – ESPECIALLY GREAT FOR READERS THEATRE IN GRADES 3-6, SO PLEASE ADD THESE TO YOUR STUDENT READING LISTS:

- **Step on a Crack** by Susan Zeder/ISBN: 0876022077
- **The Arkansas Bear** by Aurand Harris/ISBN: 0876022263
- **The Portrait, The Wind, The Chair** by Y York/ISBN: 0871296209
- **The Dream Thief** by Robert Schenkkan/ISBN: 0871299518
- **Still Life with Iris** by Steven Dietz/ISBN: 0871298694
- **The Yellow Boat** by David Saar/ISBN: 0876023529
- **The Beloved Dearly** by Doug Cooney/ISBN: 1583420789
- **Salt & Pepper** by Jose Cruz Gonzales/ISBN: 1583420967
- **Devon's Hurt** by Laurie Brooks/ISBN: 1583420118

*Note: Recent research clearly indicates that STORY COMPREHENSION is best achieved when students read silently with their imaginations fully engaged. And, when reading play scripts as opposed to narrative story books and novels, children become more engaged in why characters act the way they do because **a play focuses on character action** rather than descriptive storytelling. Recent research also suggests that reading play scripts aloud or performing them live **accelerates and enhances student awareness of behavioral choices and consequences** or, stated in research terms – **it increases emotional intelligence**. This is critically important in light of Goleman's research results presented in his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) stating that **success in life is 80% dependent on the social and emotion health or EQ**.*

WHERE TO BEGIN SCRIPTING – CREATIVE STORY WRITING IN THE FIRST PERSON (MONOLOGUES)

Two examples from *Journeys: Prose by Children of the English-speaking World* collected by Richard Lewis (1969). ISBN: 671203649

The Incinerator by Christine Short, age 11 (5th grade), New Zealand

“As I am filled up with food I get very exhausted. I become dizzy as the golden flame flows out of my mouth. I flop down and my food smolders. (Then the thing that always happens.) The small flames scream at me to let them get out. I collapse and my heart breaks into smoldering pieces as the flames get taller and tear me open.”

UNTITLED by Sandra Davis, age 9 (3rd grade), United States

“I am a ghost in a lost world. The people are strange creatures. They do not smile. They never go out of this strange world. Sometimes they look as though they are happy but I never know. The place they live in is just like a blank space on a piece of paper.”

STAGE THE STORIES USING A FLOATING LINE TECHNIQUE

- Students read their creative writings aloud
- In groups of five to ten, the TEACHER demo-directs (models) the first scene attempt, and the rest of the class helps by making suggestions
- Students plan and share other stories with TEACHER as ready resource